



File Code: 1950

Date: September 10, 2019

Dear Interested or Affected Party,

The Hahns Peak-Bears Ear Ranger District of the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland invites public comment on the Notice of Proposed Action (NOPA) for the Buffalo Pass Road Reconstruction Project. The proposed project area is within the Buffalo Pass Road (NFSR 60.1) corridor, from Dry Lake Campground (approximately four miles northeast of Steamboat Springs) to 1.5 miles east of Summit Lake Trailhead, in Routt and Jackson Counties, Colorado.

The primary purpose of the proposal is to provide for road safety, protect natural resources, and support diverse recreation uses along a section of the Buffalo Pass Road. Specifically, the proposed action would include improvements to road surfacing, drainage, and signage, and establish a minimum roadway width, along with some dispersed recreation management. This would be the second step, following the Dry Lake Campground and Parking – Expansion and Refurbishment EA, 2018, toward addressing broader resource protection and recreation management needs along the Buffalo Pass Road corridor.

The anticipated level of analysis for this project is an environmental assessment (EA). The NOPA describes the proposed action in greater detail and is available online at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=56746>.

Additional information regarding this proposal can be obtained from Rick Henderson, project lead, at 925 Weiss Drive, Steamboat Springs, CO 80487, (970) 870-2299, rick.henderson@usda.gov.

Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) are being conducted concurrently for this project. In order to better involve the public in the NHPA process, NEPA notification letters and public legal notices which invite public comment as part of the NEPA process also serve to notify and invite public comment on the proposal as stipulated by the NHPA.

How to Comment and Timeframe Information

The Buffalo Pass Road Reconstruction Project would implement the Routt National Forest's existing Land and Resource Management Plan. The District is combining the informal and formal scoping periods, consistent with 36 CFR 218.24. The public is encouraged to provide specific written comments (§218.2) on this proposal, including supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider. Specific written comments are within the scope of and have a direct relationship to the proposed action.

Written comments will be accepted for thirty calendar days following the publication of a legal



notice in The Steamboat Pilot & Today and Jackson County Star. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. The regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period.

This project would be subject to the objection process pursuant to §218 Subparts A and B. Only individuals/entities who submit timely and specific written comments will have eligibility to file an objection under §218.8. Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted timely, specific written comments regarding the proposed project unless based on new information arising after the designated comment opportunity. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to object must meet the information requirements §218.25(a)(3), including that each individual or representative from each entity submitting written comments must provide the name and postal address of the individual or entity submitting the comment, and either sign the comment or verify identity upon request. Names, contact information, and the comments will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Written comments must be postmarked by the US Postal Service or submitted via fax (970-870-2284), electronically, or in person to the Hahns Peak-Bears Ears Ranger District Office (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays) by the end of the comment period. Please address written comments to: Hahns Peak-Bears Ears Ranger District, Attention: Buffalo Pass Road Reconstruction Project, 925 Weiss Drive, Steamboat Springs, CO 80487. Electronic comments, including attachments, can be submitted to: comments-rm-medicine-bow-routt-hahns-peak-bears-ears@usda.gov. Acceptable formats for electronic comments include rich text (rtf), Word (doc or docx), and pdf. Please state "Buffalo Pass Road Reconstruction Project" in the subject line when providing electronic comments.

If the agency determines there are no significant impacts, that finding along with the EA and a draft Decision Notice would be published for a forty-five day objection period. If no specific written comments are received during the designated opportunity for comment, the project would not be subject to objection. If the EA concludes there is potential for significant impacts, then an Environmental Impact Statement would be necessary.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,



TARA UMPHRIES
District Ranger